

The Communist

All Power to the Workers!

Official Organ of the Communist Party of America

Vol. II, No. 42

MARCH 1, 1920

Price, 5 Cents

To the American Communist Party

[In answer to the greetings of Louis C. Fraina, International Secretary of the Communist Party, to the Communist Party of Holland, we have received the following response from the Dutch party. Our revolutionary comrades in Holland were among the first to join the Communist International and are an active and vital factor in the European movement.]

Dear Comrades:

The Communist Party of Holland sends you its fraternal greetings, in response to the greetings of your party. It is not in a formal spirit, but in the spirit of active revolutionary solidarity that we answer you—and especially at this moment, when all the terrible power and savagery of the American government are being used against the revolutionary movement of the United States, and particularly against the Communist Party.

We are aware of the brutal repressive measures used against you—the brigand raids upon your meeting places, of the arrest of 4000 of your members and of nearly all your officials, of the threatened use of the death penalty against active revolutionists. We are aware of the White Terror of the American bourgeoisie—the most brutal and powerful in the world—although we do not feel its sting as you do. Comrades of the Communist Party, courage and faith! Courage in your magnificent struggle against the reaction—for Soviet Russia and the Communist International! Faith in the coming revolutionary action of the world proletariat! . . .

The repression you are experiencing is an indication of a revolutionary awakening among the American workers. Your great strikes—and the intensive revolutionary agitation of the Communist Party in these strikes—augurs of great changes to come, of a developing sense of mass action among the workers.

Upon you, comrades, history lays a great task. American Capitalism, in this moment, is in possession of world power, and consistently reactionary.

All the facts indicate that the final struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie will come in the United States—and the issue of this struggle will decide the issue of the world revolution. Your fight against American Imperialism, accordingly—your work of aligning the American proletariat with the world revolutionary movement—if of the first importance. You must weaken the class power of the American bourgeoisie, and finally break it completely. Only when the American proletariat becomes definitely and actively revolutionary will the Communist International conquer, and the world Soviet Republic become a reality.

We feel the utmost confidence in the American proletariat. We feel, comrades, the utmost confidence that the Communist Party realizes the import of its historic task, and will fulfill it—in spite of calumny and repression—in spite of the government and the corrupt Socialist Party.

The fight that your Left Wing fought and won in the American Socialist Party we fought and won ten years ago in our struggle against the reactionary party of Troelstra & Co. The Communist Party of Holland is united—as your is—upon adherence to the Third International, mass action, Soviets and proletarian dictatorship as the means for the revolutionary conquest of power, and no compromise with the bourgeois enemy. United on this basis, the proletariat is unconquerable.

Comrades, battered and bruised, you will still carry on the great struggle. We know it.

Long live the Communist Party of America! Long live the Communist International!

For the Communist Party of Holland,

D. I. WINKOOP President*

Ruthenberg Again Arrested

EXECUTIVE Secretary Ruthenberg was arrested February 17th at Detroit for the Illinois authorities. He waived contest of extradition and was taken to the Cook County Jail. Bail of \$10,000 was secured February 24th, and now Comrade Ruthenberg is at the call of either New York or Illinois, with a total of \$25,000 bail against him.

On the understanding that Illinois would await the outcome of the New York case against Ruthenberg and Ferguson, there was no idea that such an arrest would be made, since both Ruthenberg and Ferguson have been ready to respond to either of the charges whenever called.

Meanwhile the prosecutors have come to an agreement that the Chicago trial is to be given precedence, so Ferguson too is likely soon to be returned to Chicago, being still in the East.

Gabriel in Prison

WALTER GABRIEL, Secretary of the Communist Party in Newark, New Jersey, was found guilty after a three-day trial on February 11th, and sentenced to serve 2 to 10 years in the penitentiary, with a fine of \$500. There were two charges, one membership in the Communist Party, the other based on Comrade Gabriel's answers to the judge in the police court examination.

The trial was quite spectacular and impressive, Comrade Gabriel making a highly creditable showing on the witness stand, particularly refusing under every pressure to reveal the names of any of his party co-workers in Newark.

Comrade Ferguson was attorney for the defense and won commendation for his exposition of the Communist program and his plea for Gabriel.

The case will be appealed, with every

prospect of a reversal. Bail pending the appeal is set at \$10,000 and some of the liberals in New York are interesting themselves in securing bail and funds for the appeal, realizing the importance of this case as the first criminal conviction in America for mere membership in a political organization.

The appeal also will be argued by Comrade Ferguson, assuring strict adherence to the party principles, as in the trial of this case and as in the argument before the Secretary of Labor on the deportation cases.

SCOTTISH I. L. P. FOR THIRD INTERNATIONAL

At a recent national convention held at Paisley, the I. L. P. (Independent Labor Party) of Scotland voted by a large majority to sever its relations with the Second International and to affiliate with the Third International.

The vote for the step was 158 to 28. The minority delegates were unanimous for severing relations with the Second International, but they wanted to hold up action on affiliating with Moscow until the results were known of the attempt on the part of the German Independent Socialists to summon an international congress of the "left wing" of the Second International, which would discuss forming an entente with Moscow.

When the vote was announced, "there followed a demonstration of enthusiasm such as had never before been equalled in a Scottish I. L. P. conference. Delegates jumped to their feet in one delirious frenzy, surprised and gratified that they were united in their desire to link up with the Moscow International. It was a spontaneous outburst of cheering which astounded the press agents (reporters) who asked what it was all about," according to the Manchester Labor Leader.

Seventh General Soviet Congress

FROM "Folkets Dagblad Politiken," Stockholm, December 13, 1919, are taken some fragmentary items concerning the Seventh Russian Soviet Congress:

Party Representation at Congress

By a decision of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee admission with consultative rights was given to representatives from all parties which have declared themselves in defense of the Soviet Republic.

These parties are: the Russian Communist Party; the Bolshevik Communist Party of Ukraine; the Social Democratic Party of the Mensheviks; the Revolutionary Communist Party; the International Social Democratic Party; the Bund; the Ukrainian "Borobisti" Party; the Right Social Revolutionary Party of Ukraine; deviating factions of the Social Revolutionary Party; the Poale Zion Party; the Society of Maximalist Social Revolutionaries.

The Bolsheviks recognize that these different parties and sections intend to support the Soviet Government, not only against its outside enemies but also in its great task of constructing the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic.

Expulsion of Friedrich Adler

Upon proposal of Trotsky the Congress expelled Friedrich Adler from its honorary membership. The reasons were his relations with the bourgeois parties and his defense of coalitions.

Peace Terms of Soviet Russia

The official statement of the Congress on peace terms follows:

"The Entente is considering an armistice with Russia. We will make peace, but upon conditions that the Entente does not interfere in our affairs. We are ready to make concessions but will not sign any

peace that will undermine us. The worker and peasant government is the only power in Russia, and will always remain so."

Progress at Ellis Island

It is now reported that nearly 400 of those taken to Ellis Island on deportation warrants are out on bail, while 81 are still in confinement.

Hearings have begun but are proceeding very slowly.

Contrary to rumors and gossip, practically none of the prisoners wish to be deported, the exceptions being a very few who are discouraged because they have not been able to secure bail. No matter that some of the deportees, along with hundred of thousand of their countrymen now prefer Europe—particularly Russia—to America, they do not wish to subject themselves to the arbitrary, despotic and often cruel process of deportation.

No exact figures are available, but it appears that most of the deportees are alleged to be members of the Communist Party. In some instances, it is charged, the Department of Justice agents have themselves made out membership cards in order to substantiate their warrants.

RAILROAD STRIKE IN FRANCE

The French railroad strike is spreading rapidly. It has taken on a political character. The capitalists are again relying on a "Socialist" minister to break the strike. Mobilization orders affecting nearly half the railway workers have been issued. The aim is to break the strike by calling the workers to the colors.

Comrade Minot, one of the leading figures in the strike and one of the best known French Communists, has already been arrested.

Editorial Page of The Communist

LENIN-TROTSKY-ZINOVIEV INTERVIEWS

THE series of interviews granted to Lincoln Eyrice of the New York "World" by Lenin, Trotsky and Zinoviev are of the highest international importance. We go to press as the second of the interviews, that of Trotsky, appears.

Lack of space compels us to postpone comment on these momentous statements until our next issue, at which time the whole series and the press comment upon these interviews will be before us.

Meanwhile it is obvious that the affairs of Soviet Russia—thanks to the valor of the Red Army—have passed into a new stage. The Communist International is rapidly becoming a formidable opponent to the League of Crippled Capitalist Nations.

THE CATHOLIC MANIFESTO

ON Sunday, February 22nd, was read in all the Catholic churches a ten-page pastoral letter, signed by Cardinal Gibbons and "coming from all the Archbishops and Bishops of this country"—the first issued for 35 years. This letter is most significant of the assertive character of reaction in the United States of 1920.

There was a considerable period when the Catholic Church was a mighty power against capitalism itself, and the survival of this is the bourgeois-democratic tradition of non-interference by the Church in the affairs of the State. But now the Church is a bulwark, perhaps the chief bulwark, of capitalism, and Church and State are reunited. The Church now serves capitalism as before it served feudalism and absolute monarchy.

This pastoral letter seems to pass by without editorial comment, by contrast with the liberalistic declamation given to the

against the "speech" and "right of representation." This protest is part of the weakest "liberalism" which exists in any of the great nations, excepting perhaps Japan. Our American "liberalism" is weak because the very rapidity of our imperialistic progress easily sweeps aside all middle-of-the-road timidities of the less aggressive and more humane capitalists and the "respectable" proletariat, compelling the decisive conflict between Imperialism and Communism. But this pastoral letter is the organization voice of fully ten per cent of the American people. It is not the vague flourish of supine "liberalism." It is an item revealing the studied propaganda of reactionism, a propaganda backed by the most powerful educational organization in the world, an organization which rallies to the purposes of reaction its profound traditions and experience of nineteen centuries.

In the United States of 1920, with Palmer as Attorney General, it hardly seems strange to read a church pronouncement thundering condemnation upon those who "slander" State or Church. Since the French Revolution, it is safe to say, no such text has issued outside of Russia, though China and Japan have identified sovereignty with deity. And of these only Japan is now to be compared with "free" America!

The Catholic ban against divorce is re-stated, thus staunchly holding inviolate the contract and property character of "holy" matrimony, thrusting the human aspects of marriage aside as mere "individual pleasure or whim." No divorce, "the one safeguard of decency and purity in the sex relation!" "If the obligations assumed through marriage can be so lightly cancelled, it is hard to see what value shall attach to other covenants when these are not enforceable by law." Divorce does not ignore "the obligations assumed through marriage." But what is aimed at by the Church is a compulsion of submissiveness more pervasive than all power of law.

There is a caution against lavish display

of riches, lest the envy of the less fortunate classes be aroused. At least the Catholic hierarchy is not so stupid as to insist on the non-existence of classes, only it urges universal acquiescence with things as they are.

On the subject of capital and labor the document is particularly interesting. "The failure to reach an agreement is due, in a large measure, to the supposition that class is naturally hostile to class. In truth, each needs the other. Capital cannot do without labor, nor labor without capital. This is obvious; but the more important point is that capital and labor are bound by mutual obligations, not simply by mutual needs or interests."

Labor needs the tools of labor, the mines, the earth, the factories, the mills—it does not need the capitalist. The financier must give way to the technician of industrial management and parliaments must yield place to the congresses of workers' spokesmen. Capital cannot do without labor; nor can capitalists exploit labor without the consent of the workers as a class. Therefore is urged "the right of capital to a fair day's work" in exchange for "a living wage." No animosity, no mistrust—the slaves must be kept alive, on the one hand, and in turn must with "good will" and "justice" give unto capital its customary tolls.

In this issue we print one of Babson's Reports dealing with "Churches." It is a fitting accompaniment to the Catholic pastoral letter.

THE YELLOWS AT ALBANY

IN the name of Socialism! The genius of the Yellows, the "authority" Morris Hillquit takes the stand and delivers himself thusly:

"The Third International is scarcely more than an idea or a name."

"I should say that the Socialists of the United States would have no hesitancy whatever in joining forces with the rest of their countrymen to repel the Bolsheviks who would try to invade our country and force a form of government upon our people which our people are not ready for and do not desire."

Well, Mr. Hillquit, how do you determine what "our people" desire? And oh! those pages upon pages of your writing and talking about the class struggle!

Socialists would do anything rather than break a capitalist law, so declares the "authority." What about Debs? Ah, indeed, Debs broke no law. How comforting to our comrade behind the steel bars at Atlanta!

And so on, ad nauseum. The American Socialist Party has become a stench in the nostrils of all who accept with seriousness the fact and tragedy and revolutionary promise of the class struggle. At least, Scheidemann and Ebert and Noske were face to face with grim realities of social conflict. The treason at Albany is to save five insignificant legislative jobs and to keep open this Hillquit-Lee-Stedman-Gerber-Berger game of playing working-class politics. To what end? So that here, too, the junker class shall not be without friends who can disport themselves and work havoc with the profound phrases of the proletarian revolution.

Fortunately our American Yellows are the puniest of all the Yellows. We have here no Adler, Longuet, Vaudervelde, Branting, MacDonald, Henderson, Huysman, Turati, Martov, Kautsky, etc., etc. The American Yellows are merely "system" politicians and they never can become a power in the proletarian movement in this country.

Out of the ferment of great strikes, and out of intense study and factional conflict among the groups of the Left, will

come the real revolutionary leadership of America. It will not be of the wordy, spineless Hillquit type. There will be men and women with the genius of straightforward thinking and unflinching action—and perhaps it will require a considerable schooling such as our capitalists are now giving the "reds" in the courts and in the prisons to develop this leadership.

We have witnessed the Socialists at Albany. We have yet to witness the Communist Laborites, the Communists and the I. W. W.'s at Chicago and elsewhere.

And we must not forget the men and women who have been in prison since 1917 in spite of the perfect "lawfulness" of the Executive Committee of the Socialist Party. Only a craven Hillquit could degrade Debs as a "patriot," when everyone knows the servility of that name as used by Hillquit.

We still claim Debs is a prisoner of the class war, and we do not disavow his guilt as declared by the capitalist courts. We do not relish the imprisonment of Debs, nor of anyone else, but we would not want Debs free at the Hillquit price. Legal defense by revolutionaries is made as a challenge of the ruling class process in the particular case. It is never an admission that there will be conformity to the laws by which capitalism maintains its domination.

The Socialists will be perfectly lawful until they have won a majority! Mark the ferocity thereafter, as if there were repression for just such a day only to break forth in a terrific rage!

The Communists will be lawful only so long as the capitalists stand by while Communism is agitated and its forces of action developed. It is for the enemy to say when Communism is unlawful. It is for us to insist that we shall none the less remain Communists and that Communism will continue to mean what the class struggle, not the capitalist laws, shall determine.

RADIO

October 23.

To the French Government
To all the workers
To the French Communists
To the Confederation General du Travail
To the Socialist Party
To all

THE French Communist Group declares to the unclean government of France that Comrade Sadoul, accused of desertion, incitement to mutiny, disobedience, communication with the enemy, is no more to blame for these crimes than the other members of the French Communist Group. Many like him are former members of the French Military Mission in Russia, and all of them call the French workers and soldiers to revolt. Like him, they all do their best to serve the Russian Soviet Republic, against which the government at Paris has never dared to officially declare war. Comrade Sadoul is a member of the French Communist Group, but he did not found it, he was not the only one to bring it together, nor was he the most active contributor to its paper. He has not been the only one to preach Communism to the soldiers and prisoners of France who joined the army or the French Communist Group at Odessa or Moscow. If, then, as the English, American, and German radios state, the French government suddenly decides to condemn Sadoul alone, and not the comrades with whom he worked, and against whom evidence has already been found, it is because it has placed once more its pretended military justice at the service of the policy of the moment. The French Communist Group warns the workers against this manoeuvre: they pretend, in condemning a man, to kill an idea. Organized workers, the French Communist Group invites you to demonstrate your dis-

gust for the deceivers who govern you, for the renegades who have betrayed you, for the cowards who nurse you with hopes, for the Clemenceaus, the Thomases, the Longuets. The process of Communism is going on: take these men, with all your strength get rid of the bourgeois capitalist regime. Send us a radio by the 7th of November. Send us from France a message of hope and triumph, for the Soviet Congress on the 3rd of December. Forward for Communism!

The Bureau of the Moscow French Communist Group.

CHURCHES

Babson's Reports—Special Letter

Wellesley Hills, Mass., Jan. 27, 1920.

WHAT is our real security for the stocks, bonds, mortgages, deed and other investments which we own? . . .

You may have a mortgage on my house. Your mortgage is of value only as everyone connected with it—the lawyer who drew it—the notary who acknowledged it—and the little stenographer who copied it, up to the jury which enforced it, is honest. Yes, and even then you cannot get me out of my house unless the majority of the entire community is honest. With the community sympathizing with me, the officers would not and could not put me out. Under such circumstances what would your mortgage be worth? Absolutely nothing. Moreover, if this is true regarding a local mortgage, it is much more serious in connection with our investments in railroads, in industries and other properties outside the city where we live.

What does all this mean? It means the real security for the stocks, mortgages, deeds and other investments which we own is the integrity of the community. The steel boxes, the legal paper and other things which we look upon so important are the mere shells of eggs. The value of our investments depends not on the strength of our banks, but rather upon the strength of our churches. The underpaid preachers of the nation are the men upon whom we are really depending rather than the well-paid lawyers, bankers and brokers. The religion of the community is really the bulwark of our investments. And when we consider that only 15 per cent of the people hold securities of any kind and less than 3 per cent hold enough to pay an income tax, the importance of the churches becomes even more evident.

For our own sakes, for our children's sakes, for the nation's sake, let us business men get behind the churches and their preachers! Never mind if they are not perfect, never mind if their theology is out of date. This only means that were they efficient they would do very much more. The safety of all we have is due to the churches, even in their present inefficient and inactive state. By all that we hold dear, let us from this very day give more time, money and thought to the churches of our city, for upon these the value of all we own ultimately depends!

ROGER W. BABSON.

An advertisement in the New York "Call" reads: "Victor L. Berger knows Socialism as few men in the international socialist movement know it." Now that is something to be thankful for. Let us hope it is very few.

And Victor is going to show that Communism is "a retrogression to a very primitive and low stage of human society!"

Between Victor Berger, Harold Lord Varney, Morris Hillquit and John Spargo poor feeble Bolshevism is just about done for! But it does seem persistent. . . . Notice how many new parties are joining the Communist International, that thing "scarcely more than a name?"

The Communist Party of America

(Reprinted from "The Call," official organ of the British Socialist Party)

WE have received the following statement from an authorized representative of the Communist Party of America: In the "Daily Herald" of January 8th appears a cable from America containing certain accusations against the American Communist Party made by Santeri Nuorteva. The accusations allege:

1. That agents of the Department of Justice "organized the Communist Party of America."

2. That these agents "dictated the parts of the Communist Party programme which now constitute the basis for wholesale prosecutions and deportations."

Mr. Hanna characterizes these accusations as "astounding." They are more than astounding—they are criminal.

1. That government agents organized the Communist Party of America is as stupid as it is preposterous. The movement toward the Communist Party is international; it is a movement determined by the war, by the betrayal of Socialism, and the collapse of the Second International, and by the proletarian revolution in Russia. The old Socialist movement has been split asunder, the Left elements rallying to the Communist Party and the Communist International.

2. It is monumental audacity, and worse, to say that Government agents "dictated the parts of the Communist Party program, which now constitute the basis for wholesale prosecutions and deportations."

These parts of our programme concern mass action, destruction of the bourgeois state and dictatorship of the proletariat, and these are copied almost word for word from the manifesto of the Communist International. In fact, circulation of this manifesto was made the basis for deportation proceedings against a number of comrades, during the Gary strike some months ago. Would Mr. Nuorteva assert that these passages in the manifesto of the Communist International were dictated—in Moscow—by agents of the American Department of Justice?

Mr. Nuorteva, in spite of being "secretary" of the American Soviet Bureau, is not a Communist; is, in fact, still a member of a discredited and reactionary Socialist Party. I have evidence which is now on its way to the Soviet Government in Moscow proving that Mr. Nuorteva is engaged in a sinister plot to wreck the Communist Party of America, and that he is trying to use the prestige of the American Soviet Bureau in his criminal plot.

The moderate Socialists in most countries have accused the Left element of being agents of the government-provocateurs. The Majority Socialists of Germany repeatedly stigmatized the Independents and Spartacists as agents provocateurs. During the Left Wing struggle in the American Socialist Party the representatives of the Left were more than once stigmatized as provocateurs; and now Mr.

Nuorteva repeats the accusation as against the Communist Party—in the interests of the corrupt and reactionary Socialist Party.

At this moment the American Communist Party is engaged in a life and death struggle with the powers of reaction. The party has been organized only four months, but already more than 5,000 of our 45,000 members have been arrested—one out of

nine. Practically all our officials are under arrest, and meetings are all broken up. The American Government is determined to break up our party. And at this moment Mr. Nuorteva tries to complete the demoralization of the party by a plot to discredit its active representatives. He will fail. Neither the plots nor the machine guns of the moderate Socialists can break the Communist movement.

Wasting English Money

THE Manchester "Guardian," in its issue of December 20, 1920, prints the following editorial under the title "Sharing the Burden." We observe that while the article appears to deal with English matters, it throws an interesting light on one of the sources of the impoverishment of the British exchequer:

The house of Commons have passed with the necessary celerity the Government's Bill to increase the scale of relief to be granted to old-age pensioners. One may endorse without enthusiasm Mr. Lloyd George's tribute to the unanimity with which members resolved upon this deeper dive into the purse of the taxpayer. Another hole in a sieve makes little odds. But it is worth while to get things in their proper perspective. The additional £10,000,000 a year which the Government are prepared to spend on old people who at the end of their life's work have not more than 10s. a week to live upon may seem a generous sum in the total. To the recipient it will mean a good deal less than what is commonly thought to be a living wage. The Government refuse to do more on the grounds of economy. Possibly they are right. We are all poorer, or should be, and perhaps the old-age pensioner ought

to bear his share of the increased national burden. But if the Government are right in this they are the more clearly wrong in other things. The final installment of General Denikin's subsidy, which the Government have not paid but are going to pay this winter, is an almost exact measure of the additional amount which would be required to carry out in full the recommendations put forward by the Select Committee last month. The Government put a higher value upon the fostering of civil war in Russian than they do upon securing a decent means of subsistence to the old-age pensioner at home.

FRENCH SOCIALISTS QUIT SECOND INTERNATIONAL

A dispatch of February 29th states that the French Socialist Party has voted to leave the Second International. Probably the French party will now join with the German Independents, the British I. L. P., the Swiss party, etc., in the proposed conference to consider unity with the Communist International.

The Paris section of the French party is predominantly Bolshevik, ready for immediate and unconditional affiliation with the Communist International.

We Must Show an Unbroken Front to Our Enemy

The capitalist class of the United States threw all the power of the government against the Communist Party of America during the first week in January.

Raids and arrests were carried out on a scale never before undertaken by any government against the working class movement. Even the Czar was outdone by the agents of American capitalism.

The capitalist government hoped to destroy the Communist Party by this unparalleled aggression and persecution.

The Victims of the Raids

Deportation

About 3,000 members of the Communist Party are being held at Ellis Island, New York City, Deer Island, Boston, and in prisons throughout the country. These men and women are charged with being members of the Communist Party, and because of such membership are threatened with deportation.

Although the capitalist government threw all its power into the effort to destroy our party, it has failed. In spite of the wholesale arrests our organization is functioning. The government has taken three or four thousand of our workers, but there are tens of thousands left who stand in their places and who have assumed their work.

The first duty of the party is to organize the defense of those comrades who are the victims of the ruling class attack upon us.

We must see that not one of our members is needlessly sacrificed. We must fight their battles against deportation and imprisonment. We must take advantage of every phase of capitalist laws to return them to our ranks and the service of the party.

To carry on this work a Central Defense Bureau has been organized.

This Bureau will have general charge of the defense of the party members everywhere. It will immediately give aid to those in localities where the defense organization is not functioning properly and as quickly as possible establish branches throughout the country to take over all defense work.

Every party unit should at once send its contributions for this defense work. Circulate the Defense Fund lists and Defense Fund Stamps.

The emergency is great, comrades, and you must make your contributions as great as the emergency. Never before has a working class organization been compelled to defend more than 3,000 of its members at the same time.

Let us show an unbroken front in spite of this attack. Let us show the power of Communism by performing this task quickly and well.

COMMUNIST DEFENSE COMMITTEE

C. E. RUTHENBERG, Sec. I. E. FERGUSON, Treas.
ROSE PASTOR STOKES JAY LOVESTONE CHARLES DIRBA

Send all contributions to: I. E. FERGUSON, 138 West 13th Street, New York City
(Use this address for defense fund contributions only)

September First Statement of the E. C. of the Communist International

[Ed. note:—This important manifesto was received during the period of raids and arrests which have thrown our party publications into a state of confusion.]

It is to be kept in mind, with regard to American references, that this manifesto antedates the formation of the Communist Party of America. This accounts for obvious inaccuracies as to the present situation as to Communism in the United States.

What is said about the unity question was written in answer to German and English inquiries. The discussion centres on the problem of parliamentarism as it relates to unity. The issue of unity which has existed between the C. P. and C. L. P. in this country proceeds on a quite different basis.]

"Dear Comrades:

"The present phase of the revolutionary movement has, along with other questions, very sharply placed the question of parliamentarism upon the order of the day's discussion. In France, America, England and Germany, simultaneously with the aggravation of the class struggle, all revolutionary elements are adhering to the Communist movement by uniting among themselves or by co-ordinating their actions under the slogan of Soviet power. The anarchistic-syndicalist groups and the groups that now and then call themselves simply anarchistic are thus also joining the general current. The executive committee of the Communist International welcomes this most heartily.

I. W. W. Leads Fight for Soviet Here

"In France the syndicalist group of Comrade Pericat forms the heart of the Communist party; in America, and also to some extent in England, the fight for the Soviets is led by such organizations as the I. W. W. (Industrial Workers of the World). These groups and tendencies have actively opposed the parliamentary order of fighting.

"On the other hand, the elements of the Communist party that are derived from Socialist parties are, for the most part, inclined to recognize action in Parliaments. (The Loriot group in France, the members of the A. S. P. in America [possibly meaning the American Socialist party], of the Independent Labor party in England, &c.). All these tendencies, which ought to be united as soon as possible in the Communist party at all cost, need uniform tactics. Consequently, the question must be decided on a broad scale and as a general measure, and the executive committee of the Communist International turns to all the affiliated parties with the present circular letter, which is especially dedicated to this question.

Recognition of Dictatorship Unifying Programs

"The universal unifying program is at the present moment the recognition of the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of the Soviet power. History has so placed the question that it is right on this issue that the line is drawn between the revolutionary proletarian and the opportunists, between the Communists and the social traitors of every brand. The so-called Center (Kautsky in Germany, Longuet in France, the I. L. P. and some elements of the B. S. P. in England, Hillquit in America), is, in spite of its protestations, an objectively anti-Socialist tendency, because it cannot, and does not wish to, lead the struggle for the Soviet power of the proletariat.

"On the contrary, those groups and parties which formerly rejected any kind of political struggles (for example, some anarchist groups), have, by recognizing the Soviet power, the dictatorship of the proletariat, really abandoned their old standpoint as to political action, because they have recognized the idea of the seizure of power by the working class, the power that is necessary for the suppression of the opposing bourgeoisie. Thus, we repeat, a common program for the struggle for the Soviet dictatorship has been found.

"The old divisions in the international labor movement have plainly outlived their time. The war has caused a regrouping. Many of the anarchists or syndicalists, who rejected parliamentarism, conducted themselves just as despicably and treasonably during the five years of the war as did the old leaders of the Social Democracy who always have the name of Marx on their lips. The unification of forces is being effected in a new manner: some are for the proletarian revolution, for the Soviets, for the dictatorship, for mass action, even up to armed uprisings—the others are against this plan. This is the principal question today. This is the main criterion. The new combinations will be formed according to these labels, and are being so formed already.

Sovietism and Parliamentarism

"In what relation does the recognition of the Soviet idea stand to parliamentarism? Right here a sharp dividing line must be drawn between two questions which logically have nothing to do with each other: The question of parliamentarism as a desired form of the organization of the state and the question of the exploitation of parliamentarism for the development of the revolution. The Comrades often confuse these two questions, something which has an extraordinarily injurious effect upon the entire practical struggle. We wish to discuss each of these questions in its order and draw all the necessary deductions.

Soviet Power Incompatible With Parliamentarism

"What is the form of the proletarian dictatorship? We reply: The Soviets. This has been demonstrated by an experience that has a world-wide significance. Can the Soviet power be combined with parliamentarism? No, and yet again, no. It is absolutely incompatible with the existing parliaments, because, the parliamentary machine embodies the concentrated power of the bourgeoisie. The deputies, the chambers of deputies, their newspapers, the system of bribery, the secret connections of the parliamentarians with the leaders of the banks, the connection with all the apparatus of the bourgeois state—all these are fetters for the working class. They must burst.

"The governmental machine of the bourgeoisie, consequently also the bourgeois parliaments, are to be broken, disrupted, destroyed, and upon their ruins is to be organized a new power, the power of the union of the working class, the workers' parliaments, i. e., the Soviets.

Peaceful Revolution Not Obtainable by Parliamentary Methods

"Only the betrayers of the workers can deceive the workers with the hope of a 'peaceful' social revolution, along the lines of parliamentary reforms. Such persons are the worst enemies of the working class, and a most pitiless struggle must be waged against them; no compromise with them is permissible. Therefore, our slogan for any bourgeois country you may choose is: 'Down with the Parliament! Long live the power of the Soviets!'

"Nevertheless, a person may put the question this way: 'Very well, you deny the power of the present bourgeois parliaments; then why don't you organize new, more democratic parliaments on the basis of a real universal suffrage? During the Socialist revolution the struggle has become so acute that the working class must act quickly and resolutely, without allowing its class enemies to enter into its camp, into its organization of power. Such qualities are only found in the Soviets of workers, soldiers, sailors and peasants, elected in the factories and shops, in the country and in the barracks. So the question of the form of the proletarian power is put this way. Now the government is to be overthrown. Kings, presidents, parliaments, chambers of deputies, national assemblies; all these institutions are our sworn enemies, that must be destroyed.

Destroy Parliaments While Utilizing Them, Say Communists

"Now we take up the second basic question: Can the bourgeois parliaments be fully utilized for the purpose of developing the revolutionary class struggle? Logically, as we just remarked, this question is by no means related to the first question. In fact: A person surely can be trying to destroy any kind of an organization by joining it and by 'utilizing' it. This is also perfectly understood by our class enemies when they exploit the official Social Democratic parties, the trade unions and the like for their purposes.

Broke Up Constituent Assembly

"Let us take the extreme example: The Russian Communists, the Bolsheviks, voted in the election for the Constituent Assembly. They met in its hall. But they came there to break up this Constituent within 24 hours and fully to realize the Soviet power. The party of the Bolsheviks also had its deputies in the Czar's Imperial Duma. Did the party at that time 'recognize' the Duma, as an ideal, or, at least, an endurable form of government? It would be lunacy to assume that. It sent its representatives there so as to proceed against the apparatus of the Czarist power from that side, too, and to contribute to the destruction of that same Duma. It was not for nothing that the Czarist government condemned the Bolshevik 'parliamentarians' to prison for 'high treason.' The Bolshevik leaders were also carrying on an illegal work, although they temporarily made use of their 'inviolability' in welding together the masses for the drive against Czarism.

"But Russia was not the only place where that kind of 'parliamentary' activity was carried on. Look at Germany and the activities of Liebknecht. The murdered Comrade was the perfect type of a revolutionist, and so was there then something non-revolutionary in the fact that he, from the tribune of the cursed Prussian Landtag, called upon the soldiers to rise against Landtag? On the contrary. Here, too, we see the complete admissibility and usefulness of his exploitation of the situation. If Liebknecht had not been a deputy he would never have been able to accomplish such an act; his speeches would have had no such an echo. The example of the Swedish Communists in Parliament also convinces us of this. In Sweden Comrade Hoglund played, and plays, the same role as Liebknecht did in Germany. Making use of his position as a deputy, he assists in destroying the bourgeois parliamentary system; none else in Sweden has done as much for the cause of the revolution and the struggle against the war as our friend, Bulgarian Communists' Work Satisfactory

"In Bulgaria we see the same thing. The Bulgarian Communists have successfully exploited the tribune of Parliament for revolutionary purposes. At the recent elections they won seats for 47 deputies. Comrades Blagoief, Kirkof, Kolarof, and other leaders of the Bulgarian Communist party understand how to exploit the parliamentary tribune in the service of the proletarian revolution. Such 'parliamentary work' demands peculiar daring and a special revolutionary spirit; the men there are occupying especially dangerous positions; they are laying mines under the enemy while in the enemy's camp; they enter Parliament for the purpose of getting this machine in their hands in order to assist the masses behind the walls of the Parliament in the work of blowing it up.

"Are we for the maintenance of the bourgeois 'democratic' parliaments as the form of the administration of the state?

"No, not in any case. We are for the Soviets.

"But are we for the full utilization of these parliaments for our Communist work—as long as we are not yet strong enough to overthrow the Parliament?

Parliamentary Betrayal Here

"Yes, we are for this—in consideration of a whole list of conditions. We know very well that in France, America and England no such parliamentarians have yet arisen from the masses of the workers. In those countries we have up to now observed a picture of parliamentary betrayal. But this is no proof of the incorrectness of the tactics that we regard as correct!

It is only a matter of there being revolutionary parties there like the Bolsheviks or the German Spartacists. If there is such a party then everything can become quite different. It is particularly necessary: 1, that the deciding center of the struggle lies outside Parliament (strikes, uprisings and other kinds of mass action); 2, that the activities in Parliament be combined with this struggle; 3, that the deputies also perform illegal work; 4, that they act for the central committee and subject to its orders; 5, that they do not heed the parliamentary forms in their acts (have no fear of direct clashes with the bourgeois majority, 'talk past it,' etc.).

No Fixed Election Tactics

"The matter of taking part in the election at a given time, during a given electoral campaign, depends upon a whole string of concrete circumstances which, in each country, must be particularly considered at each given time. The Russian Bolsheviks were for boycotting the elections for the first Imperial Duma in 1906. And these same persons were for taking part in the elections of the second Imperial Duma, when it had been shown that the bourgeois-agrarian power would still rule in Russia for many a year. In the year 1918, before the election for the German National Assembly, one section of the Spartacists was for taking part in the elections, the other section was against it. But the party of the Spartacists remained a unified Communist party.

"In principle we cannot renounce utilization of parliamentarism. The party of the Russian Bolsheviks declared, in the spring of 1918, at its seventh congress, when it was already in power, in a special resolution, that the Russian Communists, in case the bourgeois democracy in Russia, through a peculiar combination of circumstances, should once more get the upper hand, should be compelled to return to the utilization of bourgeois parliamentarism. Room for maneuvering is also to be allowed in this respect.

"The Comrades' principle efforts are to consist in the work of mobilizing the masses; establishing the party, organizing their own groups in the unions and capturing them, organizing Soviets in the course of the struggle, leading the mass struggle, agitation for the revolution among the masses—all this is of first importance; parliamentary action and participation in election campaigns only as one of the helps in this work—no more.

Insists Upon Unity of Communists

"If this is so—and it undoubtedly is—then it is a matter of course that it doesn't pay to split into those factions that are of different opinions only about this, now secondary, question. The practice of parliamentary prostitution was so disgusting that even the best Comrades have prejudices on this question. These ought to be overcome in the course of the revolutionary struggle. Therefore, we urgently appeal to all groups and organizations which are carrying on a real struggle for the Soviets, and call upon them to unite firmly, even despite the lack of agreement on this question.

"All those who are for the Soviets and the proletarian dictatorship wish to unite as soon as possible and form a unified Communist party.

"With Communist greetings,

"G. ZINOVIEF,
President of the Executive Committee of the Communist International.
September 1, 1919."